

For the use of
Communist Party Branch Secretaries
and Membership Organisers.

KEEP
REFE

GUIDANCE TO PARTY ORGANISATIONS

ON THE ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS, TRANSFERS AND SIMILAR QUERIES

(To be read in conjunction with the Party Rules adopted at the 22nd National Congress, 1952.)

The 22nd Congress adopted new rules in order to strengthen the Party organisation and its work in the fight for peace, the defence of living standards and Socialism. Included in the rules is the procedure for the admission of new members and the transfer of members. In order to assist branches in carrying through the rules in a businesslike fashion we are providing the following notes and guiding points.

IN the great majority of cases of application for membership of our Party, the essential question for us is the speed with which the application is handled, the trouble taken to make immediate personal contact, and the care with which the new member is informed of the activities and part he can play in the life of his Party organisation.

While there are hundreds of comrades carrying out this detailed work in a painstaking way, there is plenty of evidence to show that often it is just these simple steps which are neglected. We have to remember that the first discussion with a responsible comrade is a memory which will remain for many years, and it is a matter which has to be treated as of the first importance, and, above all, speedily. This is why our Party Rules lay down a specific procedure which involves the **collective** responsibility of the branch committee in admitting a new member.

It is for this reason that the comrade entrusted with the first discussion should have a clear aim in mind. He should find out how the comrade has been brought to the Party, the kind of background he has, what contact with the working-class movement, what his occupation and interests are, what kind of help he needs to find his feet, what kind of books to recommend, what type of activity he can help in.

In this way, with the report to the branch committee and the discussion and decision taken collectively, there is from the very first a strong link between branch committee and member, which can be the beginning of a **regular contact**, by dues collector or similar measures, so that we are never in the situation of having names on lists which mean nothing to the leading comrades.

This procedure also enables us to see where there are any special conditions which may make it necessary to refer the admission to a higher Party committee for decision. It is for this reason that we have included a number of such special categories which for various reasons need to be decided in this way.

Apart from this general question of the admission of new members, however, there are other questions which are bound to arise, and often errors are made and problems occur because our comrades are not aware of many questions of procedure which have become current practice. The following notes, therefore, to be read in conjunction with the Party Rules, are intended for all comrades who handle membership questions; and when changes of secretary occur, this document should be passed on to the new secretary.

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1. THE ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

The consent of the District Committee must be obtained before accepting applications from:

- (i) Former members of the Party. (See Rule 6.)

NOTE: Where someone applies to rejoin a branch of which he was formerly a member, and where he is known to the local comrades and there has been no previous political disagreement or difficulty, then the branch can make this clear when asking for agreement from the District. There have been many cases, for example, of members who have fallen out of Party activity being won back to the Party by personal effort, particularly in the re-registration campaigns. Naturally everything must be done to win back such members.

Where applicants do not come within this category, it is essential that full facts are obtained and placed before the District Secretary. This, of course, includes all persons expelled (see Rule 7).

- (ii) Persons from Commonwealth and Empire countries either claiming Party membership in those countries or applying to join here for the first time.
- (iii) Persons who are not British citizens.
- (iv) Persons who have become naturalised since the war, or women who have acquired British nationality by marriage.
- (v) Persons intending to remain in this country less than one year.
- (vi) Persons who have been members of any Fascist, Trotskyist, Titoist or similar organisation, or who have any present or former connection with the police or intelligence service.
- (vii) Persons with any prison sentence or police record for other than political offences.

2. APPLICATIONS WHICH THE BRANCH COMMITTEE DECIDES TO REFUSE

Where a branch committee decides for good reasons that a particular application should be refused, a note should be sent by hand to the District giving the details and the reason for the refusal.

3. APPLICATIONS WHICH MUST BE DEFERRED

Applications from serving members of the Forces must be deferred until they return to civilian life, when the ordinary procedure should be operated.

4. TRANSFERS IN AND OUT

Rule 5 lays down the procedure for transferring members out, and accepting transfers in. In the case of transfers out every effort should be made to obtain the new address to which the member is going and your District

notified of this. For this purpose you can obtain a printed form from your District Office. This is very important and is directly linked with the question of regular contact with every member, for each year many members leave an area without the branch knowing the new address.

5. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

Accurate membership records based on the annual registration forms should be kept by every Branch and kept in a safe place, with access to them confined to the one or two comrades whose work makes it essential. During the annual card exchange there should be strict control of the registration forms, in line with whatever instructions are given by the District Committee.

Information about members should never be given except on the direct authority of the District or Executive Committee.

6. ISSUE OF PARTY CARDS AND STAMPS

The Party card should be properly signed by the member and branch secretary, and should be treated with great care. Issue should be controlled with a record of each number issued.

A branch secretary has authority to issue Party cards and stamps only to comrades who are members of the Branch concerned, and appear on the branch records. There must be no exception to this rule and a serious view will be taken of any departure from it.

7. COMRADES GOING ABROAD

No individual comrade or Party organisation is entitled to give any reference or letter of introduction except through the Executive Committee.

Only the Executive Committee may give any introduction to a brother Party.

8. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

All Party organisations must inform the District Committee when any disciplinary action is taken against any member.

Similarly, when any comrades who have hitherto held some responsible position or who have been well-known members leave the Party by lapsing, resignation, etc., the District must be informed of the circumstances immediately. This is particularly important when the person concerned may also be a member of some other Party grouping which is not a basic unit.

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SPECIAL NOTE TO DISTRICT COMMITTEES

Please note that the consent of the Central Organisation Department must be obtained in the case of No. 1; and that the Department must be given information in the case of Nos. 2 and 8.